



Dear Procurement Officer,

As a part of the Legislative Budget Board's (LBB) efforts to improve reporting into the contracts database, we wanted to reach out to you regarding contract reporting developments in the new year.

HURRICANE HARVEY CONTRACTS

The LBB is seeking your help to improve reporting transparency for Hurricane Harvey contracts. Moving forward, we ask that any contract related to Hurricane Harvey recovery be reported with the phrase "Hurricane Harvey" as part of the Subject field. Contracts related to Harvey are those outside the normal course of business, issued in either direct or indirect response to Harvey or as part of recovery efforts.

* Subject: (Max 50 characters)

This will allow the public and the Legislature to better track how money is being spent on these disaster recovery efforts. In order to ensure the completeness of this information, we ask that you apply this guidance retroactively as well.

If you have already reported contracts related to Hurricane Harvey recovery, please send a list of Contract ID numbers to Contract.Manager@lbb.texas.gov. LBB staff will unlock submitted records and add a "Hurricane Harvey" label to the existing Subject fields on your behalf.

Any questions regarding this guidance can be directed to Contract.Manager@lbb.texas.gov.

CONTRACTS DATABASE INTERFACE

LBB is phasing in a new data entry interface for the contracts database in 2018. The new contract entry interface will become available February 1, 2018 and will run parallel to the existing interface. Starting in February, database users will have the option to choose which interface they want to use. Ultimately, the contracts database will be transitioning to use only the new interface on September 1, 2018.

Based on agency-user feedback, several improvements have been made that should make entering contracts easier. These include better graphics, greater automation of certain fields, dynamic error checking, and more frequent chances to save your data as you go along.

The same contracts database user credentials you have will work for both interfaces, and the same data fields will be included. No existing data will be affected by the transition, which only relates to the user interface.

We encourage database users to try out the new interface, and submit any feedback or recommendations on how things can be improved. It is our goal to make contract reporting as easy as possible, and this is an opportunity for you to help with that. Please feel free to try out the new interface, gather some suggestions, and send them to Contract.Manager@lbb.texas.gov.

NEW AMENDMENT REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Article IX, Section 7.04(g)(h), General Appropriations Act, as passed by the 85th Legislature contains a new requirement to report amendments that increase contract values by 10 percent or more.

LBB staff will send pre-populated spreadsheets to affected agencies and institutions of higher education (IHE), listing contracts with amendments that meet the threshold. Contracts on the spreadsheet will be based on amendments reported by agencies to the Contracts Database. Agencies will then verify the information in the spreadsheets, add some information for amendments valued over \$1 million, and return them to LBB within 10 business days.

The first of these spreadsheets will be sent to agencies in January 2018, with quarterly updates to follow. Please note that:

1. Your agency does not have to act until we send a data file.
2. Your agency needs to check if the list is complete/accurate.
3. You only need to provide additional information for amendments that are valued over \$1 million. These will be highlighted in the spreadsheet.

Please let us know if you have any additional questions about this requirement by emailing Contract.Manager@lbb.texas.gov.

CONTINUED EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY UNREPORTED CONTRACTS

The Contracts Oversight and Technology Team (COT2) is continuing its efforts to help agencies identify reportable contracts not currently in the Contracts Database. Our team is analyzing CPA payment data to identify vendors that have received payments but for which we cannot identify a corresponding entry in the Contracts Database.

We anticipate sending updated lists to agencies in the coming month. COT2 wants to emphasize that any list of payments we provide you is not necessarily a checklist of contracts that need to be reported. Instead, this information is a guide to be used by your agency to identify contracts that should be reported.

Agencies and IHEs should report their highest value contracts to the LBB as quickly as possible. Article IX, Section 7.04 of the General Appropriations Act requires that contracts valued over \$50,000 be reported to the LBB within 30 days of execution or modification. COT2 has assisted numerous state entities with prioritization of reporting and, as always, encourages agencies and IHEs to reach out with any concerns or difficulties and to establish timetables for reporting.

We appreciate your effort to report accurate contract information, and your partnership in improving the contracts database.

Sincerely,
Jacob Pugh
Contracts Oversight Team Manager
Texas Legislative Budget Board